The Things We've Lost are Not an Accio Away

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The Things We've Lost are Not an Accio Away

by LovelyLotus

Summary

After using an Unforgivable to end the wizard hunt for Hobbs, top Auror Will Graham has been suspended for a year from office to teach the children of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Though initially reluctant to delay his hunt for the Ripper, his misgivings rapidly fade after befriending the Potions Professor and former doctor, Hannibal Lecter.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

The Peculiar Potions Professor

It's Friday evening, and Will Graham would really much rather be with his dogs right now. In fact, you could probably insert any time, and that would be true.

Instead, he found himself in Head Auror Jack Crawford's office, being so gracefully informed that he was being given the year off to get his head back on straight.

"It won't be forever, Will. The administration thinks you need a break, and frankly, I agree."

"I have no interest in teaching, Jack! I'm meant to be out there. I got him for you. What could the administration possibly have to complain about?"

"You got too close. I let you get too close."

"I only got close to see him better. Would you rather him still be out there?!"

"You used an Unforgivable, Will!"

"He would have killed his daughter. There was no other way."

Jack's eyes hardened suddenly. "Was there? Or were you so caught up in his head space, that you couldn't *see* any other way?"

Will looked away, eyes darkening like rich veins of lapis lazuli.

"Regardless of why, you're lucky the administration is forgiving the incident at all. If you want my opinion, take the year gratefully —without complaint— take a break, and then come back with fresh eyes. Don't mess up your record, Will. You can still end up in this chair one day."

I don't even know if I want to anymore .

"If I'm gone, who'll catch the Ripper for you?"

If Will hit a weak point, Jack did not reveal it. Will both admired and loathed his sudden bout of self-control.

"You can't catch the Ripper for me if you're fired."

Will bit his lip hard, trying his best to rein back the surge of magic that was enticing him to *see* his boss's true intentions laid out before him like the blueprints of another murder scene. He only partially succeeded.

"Fine, Jack. I'll do it. May I please be dismissed now?"

Jack ignored his sarcasm. “Monday morning, 7 AM. Don’t be late. Chilton’s expecting you. Now go.”

Grumbling, Will left Jack’s office, heading back to pack up his desk.

Jack would be knocking up his office door at Hogwarts the minute the first body hit the floor. Teaching was just a formality— a cover story.

Will could handle it for a year. Then he’d be back where he belonged.

Chilton’s office was exactly the ostentatious disaster Will always imagined it would be. Degrees draped on the wall by tapestries and expensive oddities. Overcompensation at its finest.

“Auror Graham, how lovely it is to finally see you here,” the man purred, resting his head on the backside of his hand and leaning forward.

“I’m not sorry to say, I don’t feel the same.”

The man ignored the slight as he was wont to do. “How has the Auror office been treating you?”

“Well enough.”

“And Head Auror Crawford?”

“As he would any Auror.”

“But you’re not any Auror, are you, Will?”

“I would prefer you call me Mr. Graham or Auror Graham, Headmaster Chilton.”

“Are you always so taciturn?”

“When I can help it.”

The edges of Frederick’s mouth drooped like day old flowers.

“I have called one of my associates here to help ease your way. Dr. Lecter, please come in.”

The door gently swung open, and a man strode in.

Will attempted to avoid eye contact, but he found them inevitably drawn to the other set.

They were sangria red, like a goblet of wine or blood.

For a second, it almost seemed like Professor Lecter was surprised. But as quickly as the emotion came, it was swept away back into the smooth marble of the other man's expression.

"Auror Graham, meet Dr. Lecter. He teaches potions and currently serves as the Head of Slytherin."

Lecter held his hand out. With great reluctance, Will moved his own to meet the other.

However, Lecter didn't shake his hand. Instead, he brought it up to his lips and kissed the underside of Will's wrist.

Startled and secretly flustered, Will snatched his hand back and glared darkly at the other man, who simply smiled.

"Charmed, Auror Graham."

"Don't you think that was a little inappropriate, Dr. Lecter?"

"My apologies if you felt that way, Mr. Graham. It's a simple pureblood greeting. I would think you'd be familiar with it, considering your mother's family."

"I don't keep in contact with my mother's family, Dr. Lecter."

"I suppose they see you as the black sheep of their lot then," Lecter commented. "A dismally inaccurate view."

Curiosity sparked despite his reservations. "Oh? And how do you see me, Dr. Lecter?"

"The lone wolf who finds his loyalty belonging to safeguarding the flock rather than to the intimacies of his own nature."

"Gentlemen," Chilton interrupted, tired of being ignored. "Now that you've been acquainted, I have some things to explain to Mr. Graham."

Lecter smiled— *too many teeth* — "Headmaster Chilton, I believe I could provide Mr. Graham with the needed knowledge."

Chilton deflated.

"Well, alright then. I *am* rather busy today. You both are dismissed. I need to get back to work."

Lecter smiled again and led Will out with him by hand.

As soon as they left Chilton's office, Will snatched his hand back.

Lecter stared at him amused.

“Stop that, Hannibal,” Will ordered.

Lecter paused, before smiling a little warmer. “Of course, William.”

The name usage took Will by surprise.

“How do you know my first name? I don’t believe Chilton ever said it in front of you.”

“I might ask the same,” Lecter said in response.

Will scoffed. It was simple, he knew it from… from… from...

He blinked. There was a gaping void where an answer should be.

Will shook it off, trying not to show how the absence disturbed him.

“Have you published any papers?”

“Some in the field of medicine and potion crafting.”

Will almost sighed in relief. “That explains it.”

“And to answer *your* question, there are few who don't know of Auror Graham, especially after the Shrike. The Daily Prophet made sure of that.”

Will grimaced. “Tasteless.”

“Do you have problems with taste?”

“My thoughts are not often tasty.”

Lecter smiled. “The article was rather vulgar, but overall, a fleeting message on the mind of the populace. It shouldn't have a permanent impact on your public image.”

“Thanks, but your reassurance is unnecessary. Where are we going right now?”

Lecter smiled again, as if he found Will’s incivility endearing.

“I thought I’d show you your office space and classrooms. Come along now, Will. The rotating staircase won’t stay in its position for long.”

“This is Professor William Graham,” Chilton said, amplifying his voice with a simple augmenting charm. “He will be teaching Transfiguration this year, taking Professor Olmstead’s place”

Will stood up with a wince, trying to ignore how the banquet hall suddenly fell quiet.

He wondered if he had spilled any food on his robes or something equally embarrassing. He subtly looked down and noticed in relief he hadn't. These were his best robes, though he would be the first to admit they were a bit antiquated. Jack had bought them for him when he had graduated from auror training some 8 years ago.

Dr. Lecter started the clapping, which startled everyone out of their stillness. He was joined by the rest of the hall rather quickly.

After spending most of yesterday with the man, Will had, perhaps, a *slightly* better opinion of him.

Yes, he was a little pretentious and stuffy, but he was startlingly intelligent and Will resonated with his darker sense of humour.

"Thank you," Chilton said, dismissing the applause.

He went on to give the compulsory warnings, which Will tuned out. Instead, he watched Hannibal, who was fiddling with his weirdly intricate robelinks.

Feathers, beads, and antlers, like a dream catcher.

Hannibal caught Will looking and moved his hand closer.

Hesitantly, Will reached out to trace the feather, fingers gently stroking the vane.

Hannibal smiled.

There was something about the charm that seemed so familiar. It was like a fly fishing lur—

"Ahem, Professor Lecter, Professor Graham. I do believe we're standing up now," Chilton said, the amplifying charm still on.

The students laughed and Will stood up quickly, overturning his goblet of water.

Hannibal caught the goblet before it fell and gently set it right.

"So clumsy, *mylimasis* ," he said with a smirk after gracefully standing.

Will didn't deign to reply, but something about the word Hannibal used seemed familiar.

A memory seeped into his mind like ink seeping into a page.

It meant something like… like darling?

Will almost knocked his water on Hannibal again.

Will hadn't necessarily thought his role as teacher would be *easy* , but he hadn't half expected it to be so crazy.

"Professor Graham, is it true you're part veela?"

"I fail to see what that has to do with what you will be learning in class this year, Mr. Froideveaux."

"But is it true?"

Will frowned, but before he could speak, another voice chimed in.

"Professor Graham, is it true you're a registered animagus?"

Will turned to the new speaker, Mr. Tier, and nodded.

"Animagi is an advanced form of transfiguration. You won't learn how to perform it in your years here, but you will certainly learn about it."

"Could you demonstrate it for us!"

Will thought for a minute before he nodded. He took off his reading glasses and stood still.

A blink of the eye later and a silver-gray wolf stood in his place, bright blue eyes looking out at the class.

The students oohed and aahed.

Suddenly, there was a soft knock and a gentle clearing of the throat at the open door.

Will quickly switched back to his human form. He sat on his desk.

"Professor Lecter, was there something you needed?"

"I hate to interrupt, but I do believe it is time for you to release your students, Professor Graham. Class ended a little over ten minutes ago."

Will flushed dark pink, looking frantically at the clock.

"I'm sorry, Dr. Lecter. You all are free to go. Remember to complete the required reading by next class."

The students filtered out, but Lecter remained.

"Was there something else you needed, Dr. Lecter?"

"I would prefer that you call me Hannibal when we're not with the students, Will."

"Well, was there something else you needed, Hannibal?"

“Your animagus form.”

“Ah, I suppose it is a wolf, after all,” Will said, smiling a little.

“Do you remember when you first learned to do it?”

“I was registered my first year after Hogwarts.”

“Was that when you first completed the transformation.”

Will paused, thinking. “No… I believe it was some time during my fifth year? I can’t quite remember.”

“One would think it a memorable occasion.”

“There was an accident near the end of my seventh year. While the knowledge I learned is intact, a lot of my memories of this place and the people have scattered like dandelion seeds in the wind.”

“Perhaps not so permanent as the scattering of seeds,” Dr. Lecter suggested. “Your memory loss may be like the shattering of a teacup or some other piece of fine china. Fixable with the right bit of magic.”

Will frowned at the audacity of the good doctor. “While that may seem to be the case, you should know that the length of time between the breaking of the object and the issued repair spell significantly affects the quality of the repaired item. All of the pieces cannot come back together.”

“That is due to the loss of dust and other fine particles to the environment. But unlike in the material world, all of the pieces must still exist somewhere in your mind. They simply must be put back into place.”

“Perhaps,” Will agreed. “But I am not too hopeful. It has been ten years since my proverbial teacup shattered.”

“Quite a while to go without visiting.”

“Not really. I was caught up in my auror training, then in my job. I never found the time…”

“You never felt curious about what you forgot?”

“Even if I did, there was no way of seeking answers. The healers at St. Mungo’s told me that they took away my memories for a reason. If I recovered them, there might be unforeseeable consequences.”

“Would the risk be worth it?”

“I don’t know yet. Probably not.”

Lecter frowned.

“Well, if you ever need assistance with them, come see me. I believe there are some spells or potions that may be of assistance.”

“Thank you for the offer, Hannibal, but I think I’d really rather not.”

“No?”

“I hesitate to open Pandora’s urn without full knowledge of the consequences.”

“The urn nestled hope beneath all of its terrible monsters and catastrophes. Wasn’t the discovery of that delicate impulse enough to justify the release of calamity?”

“You have to consider there was a reason Hope was bundled up with all the baddies,” Will said with a scoff.

“And what would be that?”

“Hope is the cruelest of emotions. She simply wants, and in doing so she creates unrealistic expectations.”

“Do you have any unrealistic expectations, Will?”

“I wouldn’t say I was the one with unrealistic expectations here, Doc.”

The other professor took the barb with a chuckle, amber eyes flickering with amusement and some other indefinable feeling.

“You can never know what’s waiting for you in the halls of your memory until you look, Will. I urge you to think on it a little more. It’s a standing invitation.”

Will nodded reluctantly. He supposed he was something of a magical and medical quandary for the good doctor.

“I am throwing a dinner party today for all the professors. Everyone is eager to meet the newest addition to the faculty. Will you be able to make it?”

“I don’t really do parties, Hannibal.”

“It is merely an intimate gathering of friends and acquaintances. Only about 10 staff members. Are you sure?”

Usually, Will would decline again without a second thought. But he had yet to really meet any of the other professors, and knowing Jack, he may have to ask a favor of one of them sooner or later.

“Only 10, you said? Perhaps I could drop by…”

“It starts at 7 pm in the astronomy tower. I look forward to seeing you there.” Hannibal turned to leave.

“Wait, umm, is it formal wear?”

“Will that be a problem?”

Will shook his head slowly, thinking.

“Your robes from yesterday will suffice, mylimasis.”

Will groaned. “Please stop calling me that. People will get the wrong idea.”

“And what’s the wrong idea?”

Will huffed, turning pink again.

“I have to go teach my next class.”

Will threw on his robes from yesterday, fixing them up with a quick cleaning and ironing charm.

They looked a little dull.

Wondering why he took the effort, Will modified them, turning them eggshell blue with a color-changing charm. The black embroidery of flowering vines turned gold.

When he was younger, his grandmother had three rules for parties.

Pretty looks. Pretty manners. Pretty words.

He sort of scraped by on the first, and his empathy and knack for mimicry meant the second was usually not a problem unless he was decidedly making an attempt to insult someone.

But the third…

Will had always failed the third rule.

Turning his back to the mirror, Will lifted his curls and saw the dark tattoo etched into his skin. A ravenstag. He had no memory of getting it, but it served almost as a touchstone of sort.

He usually kept his hair long to cover it. It attracted a little too much attention uncovered. Tracing the roses blooming from the antlers of the stag, Will let his curls down and raggedly brushed them apart with his hands.

Eh, good enough.

Will arrived exactly on time, but he still found himself the last to enter.

“Mr. Graham,” Chilton cried from one end of the room, calling everyone’s attention to him, “I didn’t know you were invited.”

Will winced. Hannibal’s eyes darkened for a second, before they turned to him and warmed.

“I am happy to see you here, Will. Let me introduce you to the other faculty members.”

Will nodded and followed.

They stopped before a familiar figure.

“This is Miss Beverly Katz. She teaches Defense Against the Dark Arts.”

Beverly shot him a warm grin. He knew her from his Auror academy. They had gotten along like a house on fire.

“Hey, Pretty Boy. How’ve you been?” she called.

Will groaned at the revived nickname. “Not again, Bev.”

“I’m afraid so,” Beverly said shooting him a wicked grin.

“Are you familiar with each other?” Hannibal asked.

“We both went to Auror academy together. I was one year ahead of Will, but we graduated together, then Graham fell off the face of the planet.”

Will blushed.

“I’m sorry. Crawford kept me a little busy.”

“I heard. Well, you’re here now, so we have to go out for drinks some time. Okay?”

“Okay,” Will agreed easily.

Hannibal led him along again until they had stopped in front of a rather beautiful woman. She seemed soft, yet so bright— like the moon.

“William, this is Alana Bloom. She teaches Charms.”

“How fitting,” Will blurted out.

Alana laughed.

“It’s a pleasure, Mr. Graham. I hope to see you around at one of Hannibal’s parties again.”

Will nodded, afraid of making a fool of himself again if he opened his mouth.

Hannibal continued guiding him forward, a little more heavy-handedly this time. Will didn’t notice, lost in thought.

After Hannibal had introduced him to everyone, Will made his way back to Beverly and Alana.

They seemed like the only two people who wouldn’t drive him crazy.

“How do you know Hannibal?” Alana asked.

Will laughed at the odd question. “The same way I know you. We’re both professors. Granted, I did meet him first.”

“You don’t know him from before?” Alana asked confused.

“No. Why would I?”

Alana frowned. “No reason I suppose. You both just seem so close.”

Will scrunched his eyebrows together, confused. “Not really. I mean, we’re the only two professors in Slytherin this year, so-”

Beverly suddenly laughed.

Will, Alana, and half the guests turned to look at her.

“Oh, Will. You’re as oblivious as ever.”

After a few more minutes of mingling, Hannibal announced that dinner was ready.

Everyone made their way to the table.

Will wondered if it would be inappropriate to duck out now and go back to his room. He could use the floo network to go home and see his dogs.

“Will, please sit here,” Hannibal requested, gesturing to the chair on his immediate right.

Will nodded reluctantly, making his way to indicated seat.

Hannibal generously filled his wine glass and proceeded to seat the rest of the guests.

All that Will got from Hannibal's long, eloquent speech about the meal was that he was eating heart.

"To a reunion of friends," Hannibal toasted, lifting his glass.

They downed the wine, and something in Will's head burned.

Hannibal locked eyes with his own as they drank. They swallowed in unison.

Will was taken aback by the intense intimacy trapped between them— light refracting off two adjoining prisms in a dark room.

He couldn't breathe. It was like the universe had suddenly contracted and was bearing down on the both of them. Something in Hannibal's eyes flickered to life— like the something at the bottom of Pandora's urn. Will was utterly helpless to it— like an azure butterfly pinned to a board.

Their eyes didn't break apart until someone spoke to Hannibal, calling his attention away.

After dinner, Will helped transfigure the table and chairs into a set of plush couches. Belatedly, he realized they lacked the refined elegance most of Hannibal's party carried. They fell closer to the type Will would keep in his own house— the kind dogs could easily scrabble on and "butterbeer" could be swigged on. He groaned.

"Just what we expect from our sophisticated Transfiguration professor," Beverly chortled.

Will flushed. He subtly glanced at Hannibal, but the man didn't make any comment or ask Will to retransfigure them. *Always so polite* . Will wondered if he should offer, but the moment passed.

Hannibal served sweet wine and some fancy cake for dessert. The description sort of washed over Will. He had perhaps drunk one too many glasses of wine.

Eventually, Will reached his social interaction limit for the day, and quietly moved to the balcony of the astronomy tower, hoping no one would notice his absence.

After five minutes, the creak of the door told him his hope had been in vain.

He could guess who it was. He spoke without turning around.

"Hannibal. I just needed some fresh air. I was hoping you wouldn't notice."

"It's hard to let it slip by when there are only ten guests."

Will winced, raking a hand through his curls nervously, accidentally revealing his tattoo.

“Well you see—”

Will turned and Hannibal was suddenly right in front of him. He wore a strange look in the crevices of his usually flawless marble.

Hannibal lifted his hand forward to touch the nape of his neck.

The last person who had tried had nearly burned their hand off when they had accidentally brushed against his tattoo.

“Hannibal, wait!”

Will’s cry was in vain.

Hannibal’s hand went right for the tattoo, but instead of the burning, Will felt an odd sort of tingling warmth. Pleasure crashed over him like a wave.

“ *Oh* ,” he said stumbling.

Hannibal snaked his other hand around his waist to catch Will as he fell.

Will was pulled close and arranged just so. He felt Hannibal’s chin on the top of his head.

Hannibal whispered something in Lithuanian as he traced the stag’s antler with his thumb.

Will could hardly think straight.

“Let me take you back to your room, mylimasis. You can barely stand.”

“And whose fault is that?” Will murmured.

“I would take full credit, but I believe those glasses of wine have done a number on you as well.”

Will would protest, but he was still a little drunk. And besides, all the man had done was invade his personal space. Hardly a crime, even if it usually made Will intensely uncomfortable.

Hannibal led him back down, arm still gently around his waist.

They walked wordlessly past the other guests who looked incredibly curious.

Hannibal brought him back to his room.

“Drink water and take rest.”

“Tomorrow’s going to be horrid regardless,” Will grumbled.

Hannibal conjured up a glass of water and handed it to Will with a wordless command.

Will rolled his eyes, but obediently drank.

“Here,” Hannibal said, gently pushing him on to the bed.

Will instantly felt his senses sharpen suspiciously, but Hannibal only leaned down and took off his shoes for him. Then, Hannibal reached forward and gently rolled down his socks. His hands lingered on the curve of Will’s ankle and his arch.

Will blushed darkly and lifted his legs from Hannibal’s grasp, wrapping his hands around his knees protectively.

“Go back to your party, Hannibal.”

Hannibal merely reached forward and brushed his hand against Will’s forehead.

“I mean it,” Will said, pushing Hannibal’s arm away.

“I apologize if I made you feel uncomfortable in any capacity tonight, Will. Your mark is remarkably beautiful and my instinctive reaction to it briefly took over. I’ll leave you now.”

Hannibal exited the room, carefully closing the door.

Will burrowed under the comforter. He doubted Hannibal could ever really lose control of himself. Yet, the man hadn’t looked at him or touched him with any real intent. It was simply to look— simply to touch. There was no agenda. Will couldn’t make head or tails of it.

He would eventually figure it out. He always did. For now, he slept.

From there, Hannibal and Will grew closer like two almond trees that slowly, by leaning into each other, intertwined together.

Hannibal listened when Will spoke, quiet and attentive. He could effortlessly unravel what Will was feeling and knew how to pull him away and bring him to his dogs when he was overstimulated. Of course the dogs loved him too, though that was more likely due to the sausages he had brought with him the first day than through any genial bonding activities.

Will never had to worry about the authenticity of his own feelings with the other man. His emotions were subdued— muted in a way that Will found relaxing. There was a general air of tranquility that surrounded him that Will desperately clung onto.

When speaking, they followed each other’s trains of thought so effortlessly, Will sometimes found it ridiculous. Their conversations would make no sense from an outsider’s point of view, but the spiralling connections between streams of consciousness felt so natural between them that talking was like an extension of their own subconscious thinking.

They graded together, ate together, made lesson plans together.

They discussed all manners of things: spell creation, ancient runic texts, and even Freddie Lounds' recent articles in The Daily Prophet.

Will had worried at first that his rougher nature would eventually drive off the more cultured man, but it didn't. It was like they were slowly rubbing off on each other to fit together better.

Will accidentally began reflecting some of Hannibal's more upper class tendencies and Hannibal's speech slowly became littered with expressions of the vernacular.

They had only known each other for several weeks, but it felt more like years. Hannibal was the closest thing he had ever had to a best friend.

That's called the 'click,' Willie , he remembered his father saying.

With Hannibal, Will, who usually spent so much time in his own headspace that he was a near abysmal conversation partner, found the intricacies of his thoughts and mind opening up to Hannibal like jasmines blooming in the night.

When Will tried to explain the sensation, Hannibal had merely cradled the back of Will's head, thumbing his ear. "We share a mind palace, mylimasis. I know the feeling intimately."

As they grew closer, Hannibal's tactility increased exponentially.

Will found the sensation of actually liking someone so odd that he let it slip.

Will was usually hyper-aware of any physical contact, but for some reason, his body just didn't register Hannibal. At all.

It wasn't a bad thing, just strange.

He worried at first that he was losing his fast reflexes that had made him so good at dueling and hunting down criminals, but the sensation seemed exclusive to Hannibal.

He could be grading for hours before noticing that their legs had somehow tangled together, or he could be speaking to Hannibal at a meal in their office and not even notice that Hannibal had begun feeding him as well as himself while perfectly maintaining their conversation.

Frequent brushes against his tattoo became commonplace, as did hands across waists and elbows.

It was like the other man had settled under his skin.

In a manner of speaking, Hannibal had become his touchstone.

But maybe (just maybe) that was okay?

“Your students can’t stop talking about you,” Beverly said while stacking her papers.

He had wandered down to her office to ask her about meshing their curriculum for a week to mimic the interdisciplinary nature of modern career fields. He and Hannibal had discussed it at length, and the other man seemed to think it was a wonderful idea.

“All good things I hope.”

“*Oh,* yes.” Beverly raised her eyebrows suggestively. “Half of them are sweet on you, the other half are sweet on the idea of Hannibal and you.”

“Hannibal and I? What about us?”

“The fact that there’s an us.”

Will scowled, but it was severely undermined by the rosy flush that had crept up his cheekbones.

“There is no us. Hannibal and I are good friends. That’s all.”

Beverly smirked. “Oh ho, very good friends indeed.”

Will raised an eyebrow.

“Tell me, Will. Do ‘good friends’ put their hands all over each other and call each other pet names in foreign languages?”

Will flushed darker.

“Trust me, he’s sweet on you.”

“You think so?” Will mumbled.

“I know so, buttercup. Anyway, what did you want to talk to me about? And are we still on for this Friday?”

Will was mostly able to shake off Beverly’s words. He had a good thing going with Hannibal and he didn’t want to lose it for anything. Certainly not a silly, insignificant little crush.

Maybe he blushed a tiny bit more when Hannibal led him by his hand. Maybe he would occasionally blank out when the light hit Hannibal's cheekbones in a certain, very attractive away.

But it didn't mean anything.

One day, he dropped by the potion classroom to drop off a stack of graded papers Hannibal had left in the office.

Hannibal was standing in the front by a cauldron. He smiled when Will entered and gestured for Will to come to the front.

"What do you smell, Professor Graham?"

"Am I your class demonstration for today?" Will joked before leaning down to waft the iridescent potion. The scent immediately drew him in and he arched closer to inhale more of the pearlescent smoke.

"Sandalwood, cedarwood, and something gingery? It's kind of warm and musky." Will frowned pensively. "A bit like your cologne actually. How about you? What do you smell?"

Hannibal looked like the cat who had gotten the cream and eaten it too.

"Seville oranges and the saltwater sea."

"Oh. That's- uh- nice?"

Will examined the potion again with narrowed eyes. Something clicked into place and he froze.

"Hannibal, is this amortentia?!"

"The names of love potions are often derived from Latin. While *tentia* is Latin for held, amortentia is unique in the fact that it also has both French and Roman roots. Amour is French for love. Amor is also the Roman goddess of love. Perhaps the most unique aspect of amortentia is its ability to adapt the scent of what one finds irresistible."

Will turned a violet shade of red. In an attempt to preserve his dignity, he tried his utmost not to make his departure a *scene* , but he knew he failed when the classroom door slammed violently shut behind him.

He could barely believe that Hannibal had done that to him in front of the entire class. He had made a fool out of him and his feelings.

This is what happens when you let yourself be friends with someone. You were not built for that kind of closeness.

He had scarcely walked five steps before he felt an arm on his shoulder, pulling him back.

“Don’t you have a class to teach?!” he spat out, whirling around.

“Will, what’s wrong?” Hannibal asked innocently. Will wanted to tear his throat out with his teeth.

“You embarrassed me in front of your 6th years.”

“Everyone feels such emotions as attraction and love, Will. Even gods are subject to its whims, and are we not created in their image? It’s hardly embarrassing.”

“You asked me a very private question in front of your class.”

“Are you uncomfortable with them knowing the scent of your desires?”

Will shifted uncomfortably.

“Maybe I’m uncomfortable with *you* knowing.”

Hannibal stepped forward.

“Have you considered that I, too, revealed to you who I desire?”

Hannibal took another step forward and leaned in. He inhaled. “You carry the aroma of the ocean and bitter oranges.”

Hannibal took another step closer and pressed their foreheads together.

Their breaths mingled in the narrow space between their mouths.

All thought ceased.

Will hyper-focused on Hannibal’s lips, right in front of him.

Few things bloomed as organically as the resulting moments.

He met Hannibal halfway.

Their first kiss was chaste. Just a gentle rendezvous of mouths.

Slowly— tentatively— their bodies found each other.

Will pulled Hannibal in and kissed him again, more passionately this time, twining his arms around Hannibal in an embrace.

Hannibal bit his lower lip hard and Will tasted iron. He gasped and Hannibal pressed his advantage, swallowing Will's thoughts with his tongue and teeth.

It felt like an epiphany— like everything Will never knew he was missing. And suddenly, he couldn't imagine not spending every second of everyday kissing Hannibal.

Hannibal leaned back, noting Will's dilated pupils and swollen, red lips with pride. He leaned in again and traced Will's dark curly lashes with his lips.

"I would love to continue this, beloved, but I best be returning to my students before they do something drastic."

"What we just did was drastic."

Hannibal smiled smugly. "Was it? I rather thought we had been building up to it for a while now."

Will dove in and kissed the stupid smirk off Hannibal's face before he whirled around and began walking off. He looked over his shoulder at Hannibal, who was staring at him dumbstruck.

"I'll see you later, babe."

Their students had, perhaps, the weirdest reaction to his and Hannibal's new intimacy.

"Professor Graham, are you and Professor Lecter together?"

The whispers ceased and everyone seemed focused on his answer. If only they could be so focused when he was lecturing to them.

"I really don't see how that is any of your business, Mr. Froideveaux."

Sighs of disappointment and the chink of coins exchanging hands flooded the air.

When Will told Hannibal about it later, he laughed.

"Has your class asked *you* ?" Will huffed.

"Perhaps."

"And what did you tell them?"

“It was an impolite question, mylimasis. I didn’t respond. But truthfully, I didn’t know the answer myself. Are we dating?”

Will flushed. “Y-yes, I suppose.”

Hannibal smiled, snake-like.

“You *suppose* ? Well, *I* suppose I better do something about that. Don’t you think so, teacup?”

Will blushed darker at the sobriquet. He bit his lip and tried to compose himself.

Hannibal pinned the frankly adorable reaction up in his wing of their mind palace to return to with watercolor.

For now, he reached forward to pay homage to his love.

The Mercurial Transfiguration Professor

Chapter Summary

> Will and Hannibal continue to grow closer, but the slow emergence of his memories may pose an unexpected risk to their relationship.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

They were perfectly discreet about their relationship. Will didn't even think the majority of the staff knew. Only Beverly and Alana had come up and issued their congratulations.

They spent the usual amount of time together, except not all of it now was grading and abstract discourse. Of course, the latter events only happened in private. They both weren't really the PDA kind of couple— more the opposite in fact.

Their intimacy was of a different kind and far from undeniable when they were both in the same room together. That didn't change when their relationship started. Most people wouldn't have been able to tell the difference between pre-relationship and post-relationship interactions. Only a few could see the way their eyes and hands now lingered longer and bolder than before.

Will appreciated the privacy. Hannibal did too for the most part.

For the most part was the problem.

Because yes, Hannibal was perfectly discreet about their relationship.

Except when he wasn't.

The problem started last week.

"Mylimasis, why don't we start a duelling club?"

Will leaned back in the office chair. He was terribly tired, and honestly, the prospect of anything seemed overwhelming.

"I don't know, Hannibal. Clubs require a lot of paperwork."

"I've already handled it all, brangusis."

Will frowned. Running a club would mean he'd have to interact with the kids a lot more. While he (surprisingly) loved teaching, his students were not always his favorite part of the job.

"I don't know," he repeated.

"Wouldn't it be good to practice your duelling skills?"

Will frowned. "I don't see how running the duelling club would let me get much practice myself."

"Our students would probably require frequent demonstrations."

Will blinked slowly, suddenly interested in the prospect of duelling Hannibal, the man who was essentially his intellectual and physical match. What would be the deciding factor in their duel? His experience or Hannibal's greater flexibility with spellwork?

"Tell me more."

"I was thinking we'd meet twice a week. It would be best to work with a smaller group of pupils. We could meet once together to see the interest, then—"

"Split the class in half. One half meets the first day, the other the second," Will finished.

Hannibal leaned forward and peppered his face with kisses. Will laughed and pretended to be annoyed.

"Do you have duelling robes, mylimasis?"

Will frowned. "Oh. I didn't bring any."

"I can transfigure a set of mine to fit you."

"Thanks, honey," Will said absently, returning to his papers.

Hannibal turned back to his own grading after a brief pause.

Will curiously noted that his paramour's face was flushed a little pink. Was he coming down with something?

Suffice to say, Hannibal hadn't come down with anything. Will now knew Hannibal just liked being called 'honey' by him. Which is why he wouldn't be calling him that for a long time (i.e., 2 days).

Perhaps it was that Hannibal simply enjoyed seeing Will in his robes a little too much.

His lover could literally not keep his hands off him.

"Hannibal," Will hissed. "The kids will be here soon."

"You look lovely in my duelling robes, mano gėlė."

Will blushed. “You don’t look too terrible yourself, sugarlips."

Hannibal smiled slowly, like a snake that had gotten too much sun.

His lover leaned forward, lips hovering over his ear, and began whispering what exactly he was going to do with the robes later.

That’s how the students found them. Will bright red with Hannibal’s lips caressing his ear. Will couldn’t believe he had once thought Hannibal to be the paradigm of professionalism. The students were hardly going to believe: ‘we were discussing a private matter.’

“I’m telling Tobias to come next week!” Mr. Froideveaux declared to a fellow classmate, who nodded emphatically.

Will awkwardly pushed Hannibal away before standing to address the kids.

His lover smiled smugly, unabashedly, (*yet somehow inconspicuously?!*) checking out his behind.

Will would exact his revenge later. For now, he had to teach a room full of snot-nosed brats how to hold their wands the right direction.

Not that all of them were snot-nosed of course.

Will, like all teachers, had his favorites. Not that he would ever reveal it to them or their classmates.

That night, Will dreamed of the stag.

The creature had long appeared in his sleep, guiding him or following him with naught but the click of hooves— *so much like the strokes of a metronome* — to give away its presence.

But it had been a while since he had last seen his stag. While the nightmares hadn’t stopped, Will had often wondered if the creature simply couldn’t follow him to Hogwarts. He supposed he had his answer now.

He didn’t resent the creature. In fact, its beauty often transfixed him as much as the creature seemed transfixed by him. But the stag brought in its wake tangled labyrinths of antlers and blood— images of the Ripper’s murders, carved from stone in the forts of his mind.

And following the blooming tableaux were the whispers from the deep chasms of self that betrayed not his disgust at the bloodshed— the abject cruelty— but his deep set admira—

He recoiled, retching awake.

In the waking world, his headaches began.

It started off minor at first. But as time went on, the pain grew and was accompanied by bouts of accidental magic.

Wandless spells had always been one of his strong suits, but Will found it harder and harder to keep in control of his own magic. He felt like a dissolving storm cloud. Magic surged from him like random bolts of lightning. He worried endlessly about making a mistake in front of his students.

He hadn't planned on telling Hannibal about it, until the man knocked over a basket of papers and Will accidentally transfigured the stack of papers into a flock of doves that scattered out the open window like a newly made wish.

Hannibal seemed less disturbed by it.

"It could be that your memories are attempting to resurface. I could help you with the pain, mylimasis, like I offered earlier in the year."

"Could you?"

Hannibal nodded, reaching forward to brush against Will's tattoo again.

"I could."

"Just the pain?"

Hannibal paused, before he answered, serpentine, "Yes."

"Then maybe," Will said, biting his lip to prevent himself from moaning.

Hannibal nodded again, twining his fingers through Will's locks.

"Have you ever thought of getting a haircut?" he asked.

"Would it help with the headaches?" Will asked curiously.

"No. I was merely wondering why you go through so many pains to hide this mark."

"I don't remember how I got it, but it feels dark. Jack told me I should keep it covered."

Hannibal brushed his lips against the tattoo and whispered something in Lithuanian. Will shivered at the sensation and Hannibal pressed closer, moving to nip at his sensitive earlobes.

"Would you teach me Lithuanian, if I asked you to?"

"Why?" Hannibal asked curiously.

"I like learning languages," Will replied. "And I want to learn yours."

Mostly, he just wanted to know what Hannibal was whispering about all the goddamn time.

Hannibal's eyes lit up. He traced the soft shell of Will's ear, slowly, with his mouth.

"Of course I'd teach you, mylimasis. But what would you teach me in return?"

Will frowned, trying to focus.

His travels for work had made putting a couple languages in his pocket vital.

"German?"

"I already know German, liebling," Hannibal said.

"What about French?"

"I know that too, ma moitié."

"Latin?"

Hannibal shook his head. Will knew he knew that one. Runes was nearly impossible to truly succeed at without a working knowledge of the old Romantic tongue.

Will was about to list another language, when Hannibal interrupted.

"I don't want to learn a language from you, mylimasis. I want to learn something else."

"What do you want to learn? I'm not exactly abundant in skills here."

Hannibal looked like he was about to argue before he sighed.

"What about your magical profiling? That is a skill, isn't it, darling?"

"What would you want to know that for, Hannibal?" Will asked.

"I want to understand you better, too."

Will quirked his lips, unimpressed.

Finally, he reluctantly conceded.

He really wanted to know what Hannibal was whispering about, god damn it.

"Okay. It would be good for me to get some practice too. When should we start?"

They agreed to meet in Hannibal's office at 6 am every day.

Hannibal liked seeing Will sleepy and pliable, and Will liked that nobody was awake enough to ask him where he was going so early in the morning.

Strangely, it didn't feel like Will was learning Lithuanian for the first time.

He instinctively recognized each word and phrase like a series of déjà vu moments.

Hannibal watched Will say words he should have never seen before perfectly and speak phrases with a lilt unknowingly carved from his own and smiled.

One day, Will stumbled across the word butterfly— *drugelis* — and tears dripped down his face like falling stars. His heart seared like it had been set on fire— like someone had bitten down and left marks with their milk teeth.

Mxxxha mxsxha misxha mi—

Hannibal kissed his tears away and spoke soft reassurances to him in Lithuanian and French. It assuaged the burning, but the numbness remained until Hannibal kissed that away too.

"Wands are mere channeling devices. Like lightning rods or corrective lenses, they merely bring your magic into focus. However, you should be able to access your magic regardless. Wandless magic is about using the environment as your lightning rod. You must transform your magic beyond your senses and make it a part of you. You must allow yourself to become intimate with your instincts. Observe," Hannibal said, before flinging a textbook at Will.

Will effortlessly stopped it in the air and transformed the book into a cloud of emerald butterflies. They surged and twirled around his partner like a kaleidoscope before Hannibal transfigured them back into their previous form into his hand.

Will continued the lecture.

"There are cultures in the world that don't depend on wands. They have grown to depend on only their own innate sense of magic. While wands have made us more capable of magic requiring intense focus and calculations, they have also rendered us weaker by making us too dependent on a physical object for even the most basic of spells. While magic is far easier with a wand, the easy paths do not always give the greatest rewards."

"Similar to wands, words are channeling devices. You do not need them either."

A student raised their hand. Will called on him.

"Yes, Mr. Stammets?"

"Professor Graham, I understand why wordless spells are useful in duelling, but why would we need to know wandless spells? Doesn't a duel end when you're disarmed?"

“Decent question. While in most duelling tournaments, the match ends when one wizard or witch is disarmed, in real life, a match ends in death. Knowing how to cast spells without a wand is imperative to your survival.”

His student’s eyes lit up.

“Have you ever been in any duels like that, sir?” he asked eagerly.

Will frowned. “Too many to count.”

The class fell silent.

Hannibal quickly took over.

“Today we will be practicing non-verbal shield spells. Eventually, we will progress to wandless protection spells. Are there any further questions?”

Nobody raised their hands.

Will woke up by the Forbidden forest.

He had been following the stag again.

His feet were covered in dirt and cuts. He wrapped his arms around himself, chilled.

“Who are you?”

Will turned, reaching for his wand, forgetting that he had left it behind in his sleep.

The speaker was a small, homely man— timid, but gentle. Will couldn’t recall seeing him before.

“Will Graham. I teach Transfiguration.”

“O-oh.”

“Who are you?”

“The g-groundskeeper.”

Will spoke more gently. “What’s your name?”

“P-peter. Peter Bernardone.”

“It’s nice to meet you, Peter.”

“Y-you… were sleepwalking?”

“I suppose I was.”

“There’s a b-b-bird in your hand.”

Will looked down. He was clutching a raven in his right hand. He released his fingers and the bird shot off in a cloud of inky feathers and startled squawks, flying awkwardly into the forest. Will really hoped he hadn’t damaged its wings.

“You protected the bird?”

“I- I don’t know, Peter.”

“Coffee?”

“I met someone interesting the other night,” Will commented as he slashed through another essay with his green pen. Maybe this child would earn a dog sticker. Their work wasn’t as atrocious as the rest today.

“Oh?” Hannibal asked, busy with his own grading.

“The groundskeeper, Peter Bernardone.”

Hannibal paused, shooting him an inscrutable look. “Should I be jealous?”

Will balked. “What? No!”

“I assume there is a reason you’re mentioning him to me then, darling?”

“Yes.” Will paused. He frowned contemplatively. “What happened to him?”

“There was an accident with a hippogriff quite a few years back. I believe his first year.”

“I was thinking of something else. Peter kept mentioning a *him* .”

“Clark Ingram, his childhood friend. The two did not split on amicable terms. Peter was expelled, but given the groundskeeper position.”

“Where’s Clark now?”

“Pushing daisies, I believe is the expression. He murdered a series of young witches. Peter was expelled for being something like an accomplice. Clark had something of an unnatural sway over that boy. Hogwarts was almost closed down.”

Will shuddered. “How was he caught?”

Hannibal smiled slowly. “Two students in their 6th year found him dead.”

“Dead? But who killed him?”

“Nobody knows.”

Will frowned pensively. “But it’s Hogwarts. There aren’t a lot of options for who could have done it.”

“The school ended the investigations as soon as possible. Once it came out in the Daily Prophet, many parents were thinking of withdrawing their children from the school. The sooner the affair ended, the sooner the school could take efforts to protect its reputation.”

“And we know how important reputation is to Chilton,” Will scoffed.

Hannibal smiled mildly. “He wasn’t headmaster then, darling. But regardless of your thoughts on him, I intend for us to have him at our dinner table one day.”

“Trying to butter him up so he’ll let our relationship slip under the radar?” Will asked, wryly.

Hannibal looked deeply amused. “I’m not opposed to butter. Come now, teacup. Finish your grading.”

Will flushed pink and turned back to the essays.

“Hannibal, do you think this student deserves a dog sticker?”

Will dreamed again of the Ripper.

This time it was his first murder. The siren song that had pulled Will to the case.

Ever since he had first saw *, Will had carried the unnerving feeling that when he looked, the Ripper was looking back.*

Lovers suspended on the same set of antlers. One pierced too far and too deep to meet the embrace of the other. Held apart despite the inevitable forces that urged to unite them. The hearts had been removed and spelled to float together in the space between the bodies.

Will had teared up at the scene, a point of embarrassment that fortunately nobody was aware of.

He was tearing up again now.

The stag huffed and leaned forward to lick up his tears with its black sandpaper tongue.

A lullaby echoed in the corridors of his mind.

"Don't waste your tears, maniškis."

Will's eyes shot open, dream evaporating like delicate film overexposed to light.

He had fallen asleep at his desk.

He leaned back, trying in vain to quell the pulsing ache behind his temples.

"William?"

Will turned to the man standing at the door of their office.

"Hey, Hannibal, what's up?"

Hannibal wrinkled his nose at the banality. Will resisted the urge to laugh.

"The minute hand has chased the hour far too long for you to still be awake."

Will rolled his eyes.

"I just have a spot of grading to finish. These essays are abominable and my head is hurting."

Hannibal moved to sit next to him. Automatically, his hand moved towards the nape of Will's neck. Will relaxed into the impromptu massage. He tilted his head towards Hannibal, letting it rest almost completely in the other's hands.

"Do you want me to take a look at the essays with you, darling?"

Will shook his head, closing his eyes.

"I'm okay. I just need a moment."

"How frequent has it become?"

"Nearly every other day."

Hannibal didn't say anything. He just continued massaging Will's head until Will was nearly lulled to sleep.

"Won't you come to bed, teacup? The essays can wait until tomorrow."

Will made some sort of incoherent mumbling sound.

"Is that so? Well then."

Before Will could move, Hannibal had lifted him up into a bridal carry. He usually would have argued against being carted around on Hannibal's whims, but it felt so good at the

moment, he allowed it. He wound his arms around Hannibal's neck and leaned into his lover. Hannibal rested his chin on Will's curls and tightened his grip.

Will closed his sea-stained eyes and wondered what he had done to deserve Hannibal.

Hannibal insisted on buying Will robes for the Yule dinner party. Will wanted to say no, but it was such a small thing and it would make Hannibal happy, so he said yes.

They didn't go to Madame Malkins. Hannibal had another tailor he liked in Viscer Alley. The store was poshly furnished, obviously dealing with a high-end clientele. Will felt like soda pop in a fine china teacup.

The tailor seemed to take far too many measurements for basic dress robes.

A week later, he knew why.

The robes hugged him a little too well. They really took the phrase 'leaves nothing to the imagination' to the next level. Still, the tailor continued altering them with his magic until they clung to him like second skin. Will felt basically naked, but the robes were surprisingly comfortable. The fabric was silky soft, like air, and Will may or may not have ran his hands over it a few times too many to ever truly be in the tailor's good books.

They were just one shade darker than the ones he had transfigured earlier in the year.

Hannibal carefully pinned the over-cloak in place. When Will walked, his robes were going to flare out behind him like the plumage of some exotic bird. The thought was not unappealing, though Will despised peacocking.

"The other blue you chose was lovely, brangusis, but it washed out your eyes and visage a little too much. This hue will bring out the azure while also illuminating your more delicate features."

Will's eyes flashed like a storm.

"Delicate features, Hannibal? Really? I suppose you're going to start calling me pretty boy too, aren't you?"

Hannibal leaned in close and smiled.

"But you are my pretty boy, aren't you, Will? My beautiful, cunning boy."

Will's lips twitched. "We're the same age. Now shut up, or I'm going to start calling you Hanners."

Hannibal winced and backed up.

The tailor shot them an unimpressed look.

Will got a haircut for the Yule dinner party to surprise Hannibal.

And while he would never shave and expose his total babyface, he dropped by a barbershop so his stubble would seem a little more intentional. His tattoo was completely exposed for once. Will resisted the urge to *accio* his scarf.

Hannibal kissed him effusively.

Then he proceeded to stroke the nape of Will's neck constantly.

Will even noticed him admiring it from a far.

Seriously, his lover must have a… a *thing* for tattoos.

Maybe Will would get one for him some day.

"Hannibal, stop touching my neck!"

Hannibal had this infuriating way of blinking that seemed to convey a complete and total lack of remorse or responsibility.

After a few seconds of pretending he wasn't remotely interested in Will's neck, his hand inevitably found its way there again and Will decided to escape to his own office before Hannibal could convince him to drop his work for more enjoyable undertakings.

For some reason, Will thought Hannibal's Yule Party would be the same as his beginning of the year party.

It wasn't.

Will spent the whole evening carted around in Hannibal's arms, being shown off to his associates all the way back from his days as a doctor at St. Mungo's.

Everyone cooed over how good they looked together, how cute their matching suits were, and *were they engaged?* and *if not, why not?*

Hannibal preened under the attention while Will sulked.

Some of his auror peers were there and Will knew he was never ever going to live this down in the office.

As they butterflied from circle to circle, Will was surprised by how easily Hannibal's colleagues, peers, and high society friends accepted him as Hannibal's partner. He had fully expected to be scorned, dismissed, or even ignored. After all, he was essentially out of Hannibal's league.

His relief at the lack of social shunning bolstered his mood, and he was able to tolerate Hannibal's affluent associates with far greater ease than he could have ever expected. His occasional *off* comments were taken as humorous quips if the frequent laughter was anything to go by. Hannibal was very pleased with his budding sociability, if the frequent thumbs at his waist and cheek kisses were anything to go by. It was the most physical they had been in public.

And Will…

Will was ~~very~~ sort of pleased too.

It was only later, when Hannibal had finally let Will go to get them both some punch that Will ran into Jack.

The man Will had long viewed as some force of nature was looking a little careworn.

"Will! You look good."

"Thanks, Jack. You look a little tired yourself. Is everything okay?"

Jack looked suddenly uncomfortable.

"Listen, Will. There's a case, and it would do us an awful lot of good if you could take a quick look and tell us if it's who we think it is."

"Jack… I want to be fully committed to my students this year."

"It's just a quick look Will. I have the file with me. I didn't know you would be here of course. I was going to find you after the party."

"Jack…"

He was actually very surprised Jack had waited so long before calling him in. It was kind of impressive.

"Please, Will."

Will bit his lip. The party was far past its midway point, but Will could probably be back before it wrapped up. Hannibal might not even notice. "Okay."

Will had hardly taken two steps after Jack before he found a hand gripping his wrist.

“Head Auror Crawford, it’s so good to see you,” Hannibal greeted, as he elegantly, but firmly guided Will back to his place at his side. Will frowned at the maneuvering, but didn’t argue. He sort of felt like he had been caught with his hands in the cookie jar so to speak.

Jack mumbled back the appropriate response, looking between the two of them, almost in alarm.

“Have you just arrived? Come. Sit and eat.”

“Actually, Dr. Lecter. There was something I needed to consult with Will about. It’s work-related.”

“But I believe William is fulfilling his role as a teacher this year, is he not? He has a leave of absence from the Auror’s office until next fall.”

Jack looked uncomfortable.

“Hannibal,” Will whispered. “It’s okay. It shouldn’t take long and I agreed.”

Hannibal frowned.

“Darling, you consented to serve as the host of this party with me. It would be terribly uncouth if we left in the middle of the event.”

“You wouldn’t have to come with me.”

“I would want to,” Hannibal said darkly.

“But you wouldn’t have to.”

Hannibal shot him a look and Will rolled his eyes.

“I’m sorry, Jack. Could we meet on this matter afterwards?”

Jack narrowed his eyes and looked between the two of them, honing in on Hannibal’s territorial grip and Will’s typical obliviousness.

“Yes. We’ll speak after the party. I didn’t mean to pull you away. I wasn’t aware of your responsibilities.”

“It’s really okay, Jack. I promise I’ll take a look later.”

Jack nodded.

Hannibal led him back, pulling two glasses of champagne from one of the waiters roaming the room.

“You don’t have to do anything you don’t want to do, brangusis.”

“I know, Hannibal. You don’t have to worry about me so much.”

“Worrying about you is my preferred hobby after the culinary arts, mylimasis. It would be inconvenient to stop now.”

Will laughed. “Personally, I enjoy more pleasurable pursuits in my spare time.”

“Oh, really? And will you be sharing these pursuits with me later?” Hannibal murmured seductively.

“Of course. You know you can come fishing with me whenever you want, Hannibal,” Will said sweetly.

Hannibal blinked at him incredulously. Will sauntered away, smiling smugly when he was yanked behind a pillar a few seconds later and kissed senseless.

A few minutes later, Hannibal led him, breathless and slightly disheveled from their spontaneous make-out session, back to the party. The older folk smiled knowingly at each other while Hannibal and Will feigned innocence.

“I’m really sorry, Jack,” Hannibal apologized, leaning against the door to his room where Will was fast asleep. “William is sleeping right now and I am loathe to wake him up. Could you both set up a time later?”

Jack frowned.

“That could be arranged, Dr. Lecter. Good night.”

Jack left in an angry huff.

Hannibal smiled, amused. He re-entered the room and quickly changed.

His beloved was seamlessly seraphic, delicately spilled over the dark sheets of their bed. It was a perfect juxtaposition of creamy skin and caliginous silk.

Hannibal had carefully chosen the color with Will in mind.

He regretted for a moment the loss of Will’s lovely curls which, no doubt, would have lain like an obsidian crown around his head.

Nevertheless, Will's new haircut suited him. Artfully tousled, yet effortlessly suave. His compliments to the salon.

He spent another moment admiring and memorizing before he slipped under the sheets, taking his place beside William.

Will hummed softly and unconsciously nuzzled into him, curling into his side.

So responsive. Even in sleep.

Hannibal kissed his forehead and wound his arms, locking Will securely in his embrace. The mild sleeping draught slipped into his beloved's third glass of champagne had worked marvelously.

Jack had almost been a smudge on a perfect night.

The Ripper hadn't struck since the summer, so Will had no business being out and wasting his time and sanity on any other, no doubt inferior, monster.

Their heartbeats fell into rhythm together and surrounded in the scent of Will— bigarade and the ocean blue, Hannibal finally allowed himself to relax.

"It's not the Ripper, Jack."

Jack nodded in frustration, like it was a mere confirmation of something he already knew.

"How do you figure?"

"The Ripper produces artwork. This is inelegant, a reproduction— utterly tasteless."

"Give me something I can tell Chilton. He believes we have the Ripper in Azkaban."

Will scoffed. "You consulted Chilton on this?"

Jack frowned. "Well, you were otherwise preoccupied. Tell me, you and Hannibal Lecter. How long has that been happening?"

Will frowned at the question. Their relationship was so beyond time that it felt impossible to quantify it.

"About three months or so. Why?"

"He's very clingy with you, isn't he?"

Will laughed. "That's just how he is, Jack."

“If it ever feels like too much, let me know. I can have you back here immediately.”

Will frowned. “Are you *worried* about me? Jack, I’m not a teenager anymore. I can handle myself!”

“Just be careful, Will. His magic feels dark.”

“My magic is dark too,” Will replied softly.

“Just be careful,” Jack repeated.

“I always am.”

“That’s bull and you know it, Graham.”

“Why were you given leave for a year?” Hannibal asked.

And only because it was Hannibal, Will answered.

“I was tracking down a man. The Shrike. I found him.”

“And did you kill him?”

“That’s how they understood it.”

“How did you understand it?”

“There was a swarm of flies in the shape of a man, and I scattered them until there was nothing left of the original shape.”

“You made your own shape of the flies. Your own spell.”

“I could taste the rotting sense of decay that pervaded his magic. And I purged it. That meant purging him too.”

“You are magnificent, darling,” Hannibal said.

Isn’t that the wrong response , Will wanted to ask. But maybe that was why Hannibal was his perfect match. He could see the darkness in him and still love him despite it. Love him for it.

Will wanted to question, but instead he basked in the feeling of being seen for once.

Seen and accepted the way he was.

That night, Will dreamed of the girl. Her silken blonde hair was stained red with blood against the snow.

A sudden blizzard in March.

Will lay back in the snow, spread-eagle. Next to the girl.

"Will! Let's make snow angels tonight! You have to convince brolis. Please, draugas. I'll never ask for anything again."

The starlight trapped between the falling snowflakes glimmered green with spellwork.

Their hands reached for each other.

It was too cold.

The stag sank down by his side and Will felt the heaving breaths of his flank like the rocking of a ship.

The light of a torch sliced through the darkness and for a second Will saw it as the beam of a lighthouse.

Breathe.

He had killed her.

In and out.

The girl in the snow.

He had given her a halo of frost and blood.

He had made her a snow angel.

Will woke up violently shivering. He was on his side, facing Hannibal. His lover was staring at him, wearing an indiscernible expression.

His tears had frozen on his face like pearls of frost.

Hannibal melted them with a puff of his breath.

Then, he drew them both a warm bath. He pushed away Will's shaking fingers and removed Will's cotton t-shirt and boxers himself.

They slipped into the tub. Hannibal pulled Will to rest against his chest. The pulse of Hannibal's heart was as reassuring as the heat of his body.

The warmth drove Will to sleep. He was barely conscious, even as Hannibal emptied the tub, draped Will in his plush satin robe, and led him back to bed, far more closely tangled than before.

Surrounded by the scent and presence of his love, Will finally felt safe.

He dozed off.

Hannibal whispered to his sleepy subconscious, and Will heard the words as an echo or a flight of birds.

“Don’t worry, teacup. Winter will never touch us again.”

Despite Hannibal’s ministrations, his beloved still woke up sick.

Hannibal fussed over him, trying a number of get-better charms.

It wasn’t effective.

“I’m so cold, Hannibal,” William complained miserably. His blue-green eyes were hazy and delirious with sickness.

Hannibal felt his forehead. He radiated heat.

“Shall we go down to see Dr. Sutcliffe in the hospital wing, brangusis?”

William frowned and burrowed under the covers.

Amused at the uncommon and sudden childishness of his typically austere beloved, Hannibal followed him down into the sheets.

“Darling, you know we must.”

“I hate doctors.”

“Do you hate me?”

Will’s bright, fevered eyes widened in shock.

“Of course not. I could never hate you, Hannibal.” William shook his head as if even the thought was repugnant.

Hannibal smiled. His inamorato was positively charming this way.

“I’m a doctor, Will.”

“You aren’t.”

“I am.”

“No you aren’t.”

“Yes I am.”

“I would know if you are.”

“Not if I kept it a secret.”

Will gasped in shock.

“How rude, Hannibal.”

“Eat me.”

Will yanked aside the bed sheets and tackled.

After tussling for a few moments, Hannibal easily pinned him down.

“Will you come with me now, mano vilkas?”

“I have to teach.”

“You can’t teach like this, mylimasis.”

“Wearing your bathrobe? Of course not.”

“You’re ill, teacup.”

Hannibal reached for his wand and *accio* -ed Will’s dove gray turtleneck and black lounge pants. The gray would bring out the blue in Will’s fevered eyes beautifully.

He dressed his protesting partner efficiently, enduring the occasional elbow or knee strike with ease.

“You can’t make me leave this bed,” William declared when he was finally clothed.

Hannibal smoothly swung his love across his shoulder and stood up.

“Hush now, darling. Off to the doctor we go.”

William pointedly ignored him when they finally got to the hospital wing.

Hannibal was enjoying himself too much to care.

Dr. Sutcliffe gave Will a strong fever-reducing potion and made him lie down while he spoke to Hannibal.

“According to what I pulled from his files, this may be serious. Some of his memories might be resurfacing.”

Hannibal’s eyes narrowed.

“If it’s happening naturally, is that so bad?”

“I’ve never seen this kind of situation before. The healers who fixed him up were either geniuses or completely crazy.”

“I would hope for the former, Donald.”

“We can only hope. I might have to re-charm him, or send him down to St. Mungo’s so they can do the job.”

“What is the deciding factor?”

“If his fever drops.”

“I would like to be informed of any changes in his condition. I will be taking over some of his classes today.”

“Of course, Hannibal.”

Hannibal shook the doctor’s hand before stopping by Will’s bed.

“Darling, I’m going now.”

Will was half asleep. He still reached out. Hannibal took his hand in his own after gently feeling his forehead for his temperature.

His darling was still burning up though the potion was designed to work immediately. Now what should be done about that?

“I’ll make sure all of your classes are taken care of, so just focus on recovering.”

“Don’t leave.”

Hannibal was strangely touched.

“I’ll be back soon, brangusis. Stay strong for me.”

Hannibal returned at lunchtime with chicken noodle soup.

“Mylimasis, it’s made of selkie bone, goji berries, asphodel root, and stinging nettles. It’s not quite chicken noodle soup. There are no noodles, per se.”

“Chicken noodle soup.”

Hannibal frowned. “If you want to be completely imprecise and inexact, yes.”

“You made me chicken noodle soup. I love you.”

Hannibal blinked. His eyes were strangely damp. “I love you, too, teacup.”

Will took a sip. “Hannibal, it doesn’t taste like chicken noodle soup.”

Hannibal frowned. “That’s because it isn’t chicken noodle soup, darling.”

“It tastes like something out of a cauldron.”

Hannibal grimaced. “It has some strong fever reducing elements. Do you not like it?”

“No. I like it.”

“Good. Drink it all, William.”

“His fever dropped, but I recommend he rest for the next few days.”

Hannibal nodded in agreement. “I suppose he can leave the hospital wing now?”

“Take him away,” Sutcliffe agreed.

His beloved clung to him so charmingly as they slowly walked back to the Slytherin Professor quarters. William was so petite and delicate, Hannibal had to actively resist the urge to just pick him up and carry him off to their bed. The rooms only housed the two of them, and most nights they just used the same chambers.

Hannibal couldn’t resist a small smile when Will chose his room in lieu of his own. He got William settled for the night and then sat by him in bed as he graded the last of his students’ potion recipe cards.

Will moved closer, resting his head on Hannibal’s chest as he looked at the cards.

“This child should get a dog sticker.”

“I’m not in the habit of giving my students stickers when they do particularly well, William.”

“Just for this kid.”

“I don’t have any *stickers* , William. Nor do I ever hope to be in possession of them.”

“I have some here.”

William reached for his bag and got out his dog stickers. He reached for the golden retriever.

“No,” Hannibal said. “The standard poodle.”

He pointed at the well-groomed dog.

Will smiled in delight, peeling off the poodle and placing it on the card.

Hannibal sighed. He placed the cards on the nightstand and turned off the lights with a flick of his wand.

“Goodnight, Hannibal,” Will said, his voice reverberating somewhere in Hannibal’s chest.

“Goodnight, teacup.”

Hannibal imagined with no small amount of amusement the inevitable explosion that would occur when their classes noted the misplaced dog sticker. Maybe he would tell them that he had graded their recipe cards last night. Wind them up and watch them go. He smirked.

William recovered by the end of the week.

Hannibal was relieved further intervention was not necessary.

By the following week, he and Hannibal resumed their lessons.

“What is this?” Hannibal asked.

“I’m slowly introducing you to the art of criminal profiling, aren’t I?”

Will leaned back into Hannibal’s chest.

“Art?”

“Yes. It’s an art. This is the Ripper. Tell me what you see.”

“What do *you* see?” Hannibal asked instead, wrapping his arms tighter around Will’s slender waist.

Will laughed. “It’s not exactly teaching if I tell you all the answers, Hannibal.”

“Just for this one then, teacup.”

Will blushed darkly before inevitably giving in. “Fine.”

Will paused meditatively, looking into the images and *seeing*.

Usually, when he started talking about the Ripper he could hardly stop himself.

He would have to choose his words carefully to prevent Hannibal from knowing just how much he admired the monster's work. Even Hannibal, with all of his acceptance and patience, would be utterly horrified.

Yet, despite his best intentions, it happened.

“He doesn't choose his victims based on blood purity, age, or gender. He views them as pigs. They aren’t human. Their actions lower them in his eyes. They are undeserving of their magic, so he takes their organs as contrapasso. He takes them from them with medical precision and I… I think he eats them. He elevates what remains into works of art. He is, above all, an artist. Bodies are merely his chosen medium. He uses spells as his paint— he crafts each one himself to perfectly suit his purpose, to transform the art best as he sees fit—”

Hannibal interrupted him with a kiss.

He gasped in surprise and Hannibal deepened it, claiming every corner of his mouth.

As the kiss continued, Will slowly lost the ability to tell them apart.

He didn’t know where he ended and Hannibal began, but it felt so right. It was like they had functioned as two separate beings for far too long and now they were finally back to their most powerful state as one.

Their lesson was cut short and for once, Will didn't feel the urge to eat his words.

Beverly took him out for drinks again on Friday.

The fire whiskey scorched down his throat.

They gossiped about their students.

Before Will had settled back home, he had worked as an international auror, traveling country to country, solving magical murders.

Beverly had begun working for the school two years ago. She had wanted a more stable job to support her baby sister's educational pursuits.

The first time they met up, he had told her about the accident his seventh year and how he had lost so many memories of his school years. He had never mentioned it when they were at the Auror academy together. He hadn't felt ready.

Beverly hadn't pity him. Didn't tell him that he was any less than a whole person.

And for that, Will had found himself developing a much keener fondness for her. That was why they kept this biweekly meeting up.

Hannibal was amazing, but there was something uniquely wonderful about having a friend. It was like a taste of the normality he had never allowed himself.

He had a steady job he liked, a boyfriend he loved, and now, he supposed, a best friend. It was hard to imagine he would have to give up the majority of those things next year when he returned to the Auror office.

It made him surprisingly sad.

"Hannibal, who drew this?"

Will pointed to a little butterfly drawing on Hannibal's Occlumency book. Hannibal had suggested it, saying the techniques could help with his headaches.

Will had taken a course on it at the Auror academy, but the curriculum had been mainly focused on resisting torture and other interrogation means.

Hannibal glanced at the drawing, putting down his own book.

"I had a sister. She loved butterflies."

"Had?"

"She was murdered."

"That's terrible," Will whispered, leaning over to wrap his arms around Hannibal. "I'm so sorry."

He felt his lover's sadness and remorse like his own. That had to be why his heart hurt so much. He felt a tear trace down his cheek.

"It wasn't your fault, William," Hannibal reassured, somehow speaking to the weird tracing of guilt fluttering through his nerves.

"What was her name?"

"Mischa."

Mischa mischa mischa mischa

Will choked on his own breath.

"William?"

"No. It's nothing."

He frowned. It was like he was on the cusp of remembering something. The more he tried to reach for it the more it slipped away.

Hannibal was watching him carefully, cataloguing all the emotions that expressed themselves on his face like he was memorizing them. It made him feel strangely self-conscious. Strange because he hadn't felt self-conscious in front of Hannibal for months.

Sighing in frustration, he let it go.

"Do you think you'll renew your teaching contract, beloved?"

Hannibal asked one night.

They lay intertwined at the limbs, exhausted from their more pleasurable pursuits.

"I don't know, Hannibal. I still feel drawn towards my old job."

"The violence of it attracts you."

Will recoiled. "I save lives."

Hannibal frowned. "I am your paramour, Will. I don't care for the lives you save, I care about your life. And certainly, you are happy here at Hogwarts, aren't you?"

"Of course I'm happy here with you, Hannibal. I just haven't thought about it yet."

Hannibal frowned. Will was reminded of a grouchy cat.

Laughing, he tilted his head back and pressed a kiss to his lover's throat.

Hannibal held out for approximately five seconds before his lips were all over Will again.

"We're not at the end of the year, honey. We don't have to decide yet."

"We?"

"It's my decision, but of course I'll factor your opinion into it. We're together, Hannibal. Regardless of what happens, I hope that won't change."

Hannibal was silent, but his eyes told a thousand stories.

"It won't."

They went out to Hogsmeade the next weekend.

There was a fortune teller set up in a tent on the edge of the street. Her name was Margot. Neither of them believe in divination, but they entered for their own amusement.

"What is your wand made of?" she asked.

Will twitched. It was a very personal question.

Finally, he responded.

"10.5 inches, Cherry, Ravenstag antler."

"And you?" she asked Hannibal.

"12 inches, Yew, also Ravenstag antler."

"Ravenstags are extinct."

"Yes," Will agreed.

The cards flipped over by themselves and she analyzed them with the look of a scientist.

"Your pasts and futures are intertwined," she said.

Hannibal said, "What else?"

Margot said, "Your hearts and souls are too. You have twin wands. I've never seen two people share such a strong destiny together before."

Hannibal smiled.

Will frowned.

He waited until they were back at Hogwarts and past all of their giggling students who seemed to find Hannibal and him strangely fascinating.

For once, he felt like the butt of their joke.

“Hannibal, you knew me before, didn’t you?”

“What do you mean, mylimasis?”

“Before I lost my memories.”

Hannibal suddenly looked serious. His face looked angular— a chiaroscuro of light and dark.

“Yes. I did.”

Will had vaguely known in the back of his mind, but confirmation still felt like a punch in the face.

“When you knew me, what were we? Friends, enemies, lovers?”

“All of the above at some point, not necessarily in that order.”

Will froze and backed up.

“Are you playing with me, Hannibal? You realize I can’t get those pieces back, right? What we had, what we were— it’s gone.”

“It doesn’t have to be, mano meilė. I know how we can retrieve the lost fragments of your past.”

“What if I don’t want them back, Hannibal? I like who I am now. I don’t want to change into something else.”

“You’re already changing, mylimasis. Little by little. Haven’t you noticed that you’ve gradually been becoming something different?”

The words felt like a knife to the stomach or a cruciatus curse.

Will stood and left.

That night, he didn’t sleep in their room, retreating instead to his own disused one.

He lay wide awake long into the night, feeling the ugly and bitter sense of rejection like a phantom pain in his limbs.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for reading.

The Great Maleficence

Chapter Summary

> Will must come to terms with his shared hidden past with Hannibal to have a future with the man he loves.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Will woke up in the main courtyard this time, feet still bare and throbbing from his unexpected journey. He sat on the floor, knees tucked to his chest, missing Hannibal desperately but unwilling to admit it. He'd have to walk back to his room soon, but his legs ached. Maybe he could heal them with some wandless magic, but at the moment, he was simply too tired.

A snuffling sound by his ear interrupted his thoughts. Will glanced up in shock. He had never hallucinated his stag while conscious before. Dark and majestic as always, the stag nuzzled up against Will until he gave into the creature's unspoken demand and clambered onto its back.

Were you supposed to be able to touch hallucinations?

Will decided to figure it out tomorrow.

The stag took him back to his bedroom, but Will had already fallen asleep on its back, so the stag merely extended the trip by a few hoovesteps and brought him to Hannibal's room instead.

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Will woke up as he usually did, clinging tightly to Hannibal. He sprang back in shock, still twisted up in the sheets. He didn't remember coming here last night.

"I'm sorry, Hannibal. I must have sleep-walked here."

Will avoided his love's madder eyes. If he looked into them, he knew all his anger would dissolve like mist.

"Will…"

"I'm going to leave now."

Will stood up and moved towards the door. His feet were healed.

“William, stop.”

Will ignored him and left back to his own room. It felt like some nightmarish version of the Walk of Shame.

The bodies stretched out, mirrors for eyes. Will kneeled sadly by the dog, which the killer had shot before attacking the rest of the family.

“Their corneas were transfigured into mirrors after they died,” Will explained, staring at his reflection in the victim’s eyes.

Jack kissed his teeth impatiently. “Ripper or no, Will?”

“This is something entirely different, Jack. We have a new killer on our hands.”

“Are you sure, Will? Because I look at the artistry and the layout of the bodies and I think Ripper.”

“The Ripper doesn’t do mass murders on this scale. He doesn’t kill whole families much less shoot pets.”

“Escalation.”

“The Ripper wouldn’t escalate this way. He would be more likely to change the art inspiration of his tableux instead of increasing victim numbers. Also, these bodies have no clear artistic influence. They seem to be more of a reflection of the killer’s own psychological state.”

“You’ll let me know if anything else comes to mind?”

“Of course,” Will said, swinging one leg over his broomstick.

He took off, leaving Jack and the crime scene behind. He took the long route home, lying back on his broomstick and letting it take him where it wished. He landed back at Hogwarts eventually, the sun already setting. He went back to his empty room, throwing the file on his bedside table and crawled under the sheets. He reached across the bed out of habit, leaving his hand there when it was met with nothing.

Much as he wanted to, Will didn’t allow himself to ditch duelling club. He had made a commitment as one of the instructors and he wasn’t about to break it. Hannibal was already

in the room, eyes widening in surprise when Will walked in.

“Today we’ll be doing practice duels tournament style. Professor Lecter and I will demonstrate.”

“Make a circle,” Hannibal instructed, acquiescing to Will’s change in lesson plan, even though he hadn’t been consulted before.

They bowed to each other as was customary.

The duel began and Hannibal immediately cast a *protego* . Will shot shield breaking spells, but the golden barrier held. Growing frustrated, he cast *finestra* on the glass window, sending broken shards flying towards Hannibal. Hannibal let his shield fall to dodge the shards.

“Rictusempra.” Will immediately felt a light and feathery sensation spread through his entire body. He covered his mouth with his left hand but couldn’t stop the laughter from breaking through. Hannibal approached.

“Impedimenta,” Will gasped through his laughter. Hannibal fell backwards. The tickling charm stopped.

“Expelliarmus,” they chanted at the same time.

Both wands went flying in opposite directions. Will clapped his hands and conjured a jet of fire. Hannibal dove to the ground sending a stream of water spiralling to put out the flames. They picked up each other’s wands, intent on continuing the duel.

They gained no ground on each other. The battle continued for nearly the entire hour of duelling club. It was relentless. Highly focused as they were, they nearly forgot there were students even watching them in the first place. Finally, Will cast a *levicorpus* which Hannibal did not block. He dangled by his ankles as Will approached, pressing Hannibal’s wand to its owners throat.

“Do you forgive me, Will?” Hannibal asked, looking like a fool upside down, his robe flapping like bat wings.

“I wasn’t aware you even apologized in the first place.”

Will grabbed his wand, throwing Hannibal’s to the ground and left, leaving Hannibal to clean the mess they had made of the classroom in their fight. He went to his room and changed, grabbing the file Jack gave him. He then headed to the Astronomy tower where he knew he would get some peace of mind.

To be honest, he did feel a little better after landing some curses on Hannibal. But now that his anger was burnt out, he could only feel the misery that he had buried under his fury.

He wished they could have just been two normal people who met and fell in love, without the complications his lost memories brought. But maybe Hannibal wouldn’t have even bothered without their past. After all, they were on different levels. Hannibal was a pure-blood and rich as hell. He was, well, neither of those things.

He opened the file, noting that Jack had included both Ripper murders and the new killer they were calling The Tooth Fairy. He buried himself in the artistry of the Ripper kills, noting the ever present feeling that the Ripper was somehow speaking to him in particular. He doubted the Ripper even knew his name, much less had followed his life for some odd 8 years.

If Jack knew his ambiguous feelings for the monster they were hunting, he'd have him locked up in St. Mungo's faster than you could say "Ripper." He had confided in Hannibal some of those feelings, but now it was hard not to regret divulging so much. If Hannibal wanted revenge…

He turned to the Tooth Fairy kills, letting the pendulum swing back and forth, trying to piece together the man from the faintest reverberations of his magic in the crime scene. The backs of his eyes filled with the curl of smoke and flame.

Realization sparked within him and he packed up the file, running to the library.

The Tooth Fairy was quickly rebranded The Great Red Dragon once Will explained the influence behind the kills. The Blake drawing was hung all over the lab, people poring over books for spells that could transform wizards into dragons.

"He could be trying to achieve his animagus form," one of Will's colleagues proposed. There was simply no way of knowing.

Jack had called him to a new scene today, distinctly different than the Red Dragon kills.

Will stilled as he realized it was the Ripper. He multiplied the time he'd have to spend at the scene in two. Luckily, Alana had agreed to take his classes today. He took a deep sip of coffee, preparing himself to analyze the murder. He shivered, noting the goosebumps on his skin. He was weirdly excited. It had been a little over a year since the last Ripper murder.

The scene that lay in front of him came straight from *The Tales of Beedle the Bard*. Coincidentally, it was Will's favorite tale: The Warlock's Hairy Heart.

A man with silver blonde hair lay with two hearts in his hand next to another man, dark-haired and blue-eyed, who was missing his heart. Will let the pendulum swing, becoming overcome with the killer's feelings of love and remorse.

The heartless warlock who was lost with the idea of love and had confused it with possession.

Oh god no.

Hannibal.

It was basically the both of them lying there.

I'm not opposed to butter.

The Ripper is an artist.

A lover scorned.

Will dropped his coffee and cursed.

The signs had been there all along.

Hannibal Lecter was the Ripper.

He had slept with the Ripper.

He had fallen in love with the Ripper.

He had been so blind.

Of course, the only person who could completely understand him would be a serial killer.

He knew in his mind that he should go right now and tell Jack everything. That was the only logical course of action.

But he didn't.

Instead, he went home to his dogs and cried long and hard, regretting everything.

The week went on and Will continued to avoid Hannibal.

He didn't know what to do.

He couldn't understand why he didn't just turn in Hannibal once and for all. He'd never have to deal with the other man again and maybe his heart would finally stop hurting once he got some closure.

But every time he reached for his phone to dial Jack, he found himself putting it down again. He still had so many questions. Maybe it was possible now that the Ripper truly had been reaching out and communicating with him this whole time. He needed to relook at the file. He almost reached for it, but a wave of unease overcame him—he didn't want to know what he would find.

The real question was: why was the Ripper so eager for him to recover his memories? Who had he been in the past and just what had he meant to Hannibal? He wasn't ready for the answer.

By the end of the week, Will grew sick of it all. He was wracked with dual sensations of anxiety and guilt. The file haunted him from his bedside table but he refused to look. He had to move on. He refused to be in love with the Ripper—Hannibal—any longer.

Beverly took him out for drinks Friday with Alana.

The whole school had heard of their break-up. It was a disaster of epic proportions, but Will couldn't really bring himself to care after his epiphany earlier in the week.

Will kissed Alana at the end of the night.

It was pleasant, but deeply unsatisfying.

After Hannibal, all affection would be.

She said, "Let's not do that again."

And Will agreed.

He went home and opened the file, laying out the photographs in order. He had to look, or he'd wonder for the rest of his life.

He emerged from his mind palace almost three hours later, eyes red and damp. Hannibal's love for him was spelled out over the years and years they had spent apart. It was hard not to be moved. Hannibal had reached inside of him and taken hold of his soul. It felt impossible not to forgive the other man after examining the love letters Hannibal had written over and over again for him. Those lost years were unimaginable to him—he didn't know what they had been together, but whatever it was, it had to have been unimaginably intimate based on what the bodies and Hannibal himself said. Hannibal was what his life as an auror had been missing this whole time. The other man had never wavered and never looked at anybody else despite the many years that had passed and the fact that Will couldn't even remember him. He had been faithful beyond any words. He thought of his kiss with Alana and the shame burned.

He couldn't wait any longer. He had to see Hannibal now. He left his chambers, almost sprinting to the other man's door.

He knocked and it swung open almost immediately. Hannibal stood stoney and silent.

"I kissed Alana Bloom," Will blurted out. The guilt was driving him insane.

“I know,” Hannibal replied coldly.

“Oh. Y-you do?”

“I was there. I was hoping to speak to you. Needless to say that didn’t happen.”

Will exhaled sharply. “You followed me to the bar? Seriously, Hannibal?!”

“I wouldn’t have had to if you hadn’t avoided me all week.”

“I avoided you because I needed space. Our relationship is unhealthy, Hannibal. Surely you can see that? You have some idealized notion of me based on memories I no longer have.”

Hannibal’s eyes grew hot, like a beast emerging from slumber.

“Regardless of our past together, we have spent over half a year together, Will. If I truly had harbored any misconceptions about you, don’t you think they would have been corrected by now?”

“You’ve just been waiting for me to get my memories back to clear any flaws in my personality.”

“You’re being unfair, Will.”

Will turned away uncomfortably.

“I swear to you, William, even if you recovered what we shared together, I would still remember the you from this time forever.”

“You can’t possibly mean that.”

“Don’t you think I should be the judge of that, mano meilė?”

Will exhaled a shaky breath.

He loved the Ripper.

No, that wasn’t quite right.

He loved Hannibal.

And Hannibal loved him too.

Stepping forward, Will pulled Hannibal into a kiss, feeling the other man’s brief surprise before it was drowned by lust.

The door closed behind him.

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Hours later, they were half-asleep, snuggled up together on Hannibal's bed. Will lay against Hannibal's bare chest, basking in the feeling of being exactly where he belonged.

"I have to show you something, Will."

Will gave Hannibal a sleepy nod and his lover whispered a brief incantation.

"Hannibal, what's this?" Will asked in awe.

He knew his lover glamoured a spot on his chest, but he had assumed it was an embarrassing scar. People usually magicked away the marks life bestowed on them. It was fairly commonplace.

Will never did it. He should have known Hannibal wouldn't either.

"We match," Will whispered, placing his palm flat against the matching stag tattoo on Hannibal's heart.

"We came up with the spellwork together our sixth year and marked each other the beginning of our seventh," Hannibal confessed hesitantly.

"It's beautiful," Will murmured, pressing down to kiss it. "You're beautiful."

Hannibal flushed red.

Will delighted in seeing how far it spread.

They were late to breakfast that morning and Will fought the anxiety that came with the entire school knowing exactly what had happened between them. Beverly shot him an approving glance when he and Hannibal took their breakfast together as they always did before their fight. Hannibal was even more doting than usual, and Will knew it was his way of apologizing.

That week marked a return to the honeymoon phase of their relationship but with much greater intensity than before.

And one day, sitting on his desk in their shared office, watching the sun set, Will knew he wanted to spend the rest of his life with Hannibal.

"Hey, do you want to get married or something?"

Hannibal looked like he was going to have a heart attack.

"I mean, I'm fine the way we are now, but if you want to, I'd be down."

The vein on Hannibal's forehead throbbed. "This was not how I envisioned the proposal." Will laughed. "How did you imagine it?"

"For one, I thought I'd be the one doing the proposing. Secondly, I did not think our office was a fitting romantic setting for such a monumental event."

Will frowned ruefully. "I guess I should've waited before blurting it out. I just thought of us getting married and it felt right, you know?"

"You don't mean to tell me this is the first you've thought of marriage?"

"Well, I knew I wanted to stay with you as long as you'd have me, I just didn't immediately translate that in my head to marriage."

Hannibal gave a petulant sigh.

"Are you mad? I'm sorry, honey."

"I think I will propose anyway."

"Please do." Will waited patiently, looking expectantly at Hannibal.

"Certainly not now, teacup. I will ensure you do not expect it. But, there's one thing you must know if we are to get married," Hannibal confessed in a voice wrought with nerves. Will turned to look at his love, noticing that Hannibal was literally trembling, a thin sheen of sweat covering his skin. "Forgive me. I cannot lose you again."

"You won't, Hannibal. I'm yours."

"You say that now."

Will swung down from the desk, moving across the room to Hannibal's desk. He climbed up Hannibal's desk, hugging the other man's head to his chest.

"It's okay, babe. I already know who you are. I can see you. All of you."

His lover looked up in shock.

" *The Warlock's Hairy Heart* . Did you know that was my favorite fairy tale?"

Before he could blink, Will found himself shoved down on the desk, being kissed within an inch of his life. Hannibal quickly began covering all of Will's face in kisses: his eyelids, his chin, his forehead. Then, his fiancee slowly began progressing downwards with his lips. Will moaned as Hannibal sucked a dark bruise on his throat.

"Say you're mine again," Hannibal demanded.

Will gasped as Hannibal unbuttoned his robe, moving from his neck to his collarbones.

"I'm—I'm yours, Hannibal."

“Again.”

“I’m yours.”

“Yes, you are,” Hannibal agreed before they both stopped speaking for far more pleasurable pursuits.

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That night, when Will and Hannibal were bare and tangled up in their sheets once again, Hannibal asked the question.

“Will, would you ever consider working with me?”

Will frowned, uncomfortable. “I know who I am. I can’t kill for the reasons you do, Hannibal.”

“I know, mano vilkas. Your fire and brimstone is motivated by righteous fury. I don’t expect you to change that. But I am more than willing to be flexible and allow you to pick. Who we do is not as important to me as what we do and that we do it together.”

Will smiled. “Right now, the only *who* I want to do is you.”

“You’re incorrigible.” Hannibal leaned down and bit Will’s lower lip. He laved his tongue across the bleeding wound. Will bit back. They entangled their mouths and bodies together again—a perfect interlacement of hearts and minds.

Together they were one complete soul. One complete being.

“As tave myliu, Hannibal,” Will whispered against their lips.

“As tave labai myliu, Will,” Hannibal whispered back. “I won’t let you go again.”

“I won’t let you go either.”

A few days later, Will woke up screaming.

His head was exploding.

Hannibal rushed him to St. Mungo’s.

It felt like the world was ending.

His memories were fragmented and non-linear, like a meaningless jumble of sensory information.

The flash of the machines. The light of spellwork. The cedarwood, aromatic smell of Hannibal's cologne.

—

Lips on his brow. A hand in his.

Terrible terrible pain.

—

"We might have to obliviate him again, Dr. Lecter. The more he remembers, the more it begins hurting him. His mind is more fragile to those sort of intrusions."

—

Hannibal wheeled Will back to his apartment.

The dogs rushed to greet them.

He would be returning to St. Mungo's the following week to have his memories wiped.

"I can't forget you again, Hannibal. I don't want to. I'd rather die," he said later, resting his ear on Hannibal's heart. It amazed him how steady the pulse was.

"Calm, brangusis. Do you trust me?"

Will frowned.

"Mostly."

Hannibal chuckled.

"I know how to break the curse, mylimasis, but you may get all of your memories back. How does that make you feel?"

Will growled. "How does that make *you* feel? Don't be an idiot, Hannibal. I don't care if I get my memories back. I just can't lose them again."

Hannibal smiled, triumphant.

"Have you heard of horcruxes, darling?"

Will frowned.

"That's some very dark magic."

"In most cases, those who make just one are fine."

"What does that have to do with anything?"

“The night Mischa died, her killer made a horcrux.”

Will frowned.

“What was his name?”

“Grutas.”

“And what was the object he chose?”

“It was you, darling. We were both present when she died, but due to the adhesive property of your magic, it cottoned on.”

Will shuddered, having the sudden urge to crawl out of his skin.

“Of course we killed him soon after, but to prevent him from taking over your body, you had to sacrifice your memories.”

“So how do we get rid of it?”

“I can replace his horcrux with my own.”

Hannibal looked at him closely, clearly expecting some kind of protest.

Will snorted. “I suppose all those other murders were just practice then?”

“Maybe, in a manner of speaking,” Hannibal reasoned with a wide grin.

“So how will this play out?”

“You choose someone for us to kill—a proxy. We attack them together. I deal the finishing blow and say the spell to create the horcrux. I make you the object of my horcrux. As I do, Grutas’ horcrux will release and likely enter a nearby object or conduit. We destroy it with fiendfyre and then your memories should naturally release as there is no longer a maleficent spirit contained within them.”

“I mean, there’ll be you. You’re pretty maleficent,” Will pointed out. “Imagine: a shard of the Big Bad Ripper’s soul inside me.” Will could tell Hannibal was terribly aroused by the idea.

“You already have my heart, teacup. It’s fitting you have some of my soul too,” Hannibal replied sentimentally, before rolling so Will was trapped under him. Before Will could say anything, Hannibal was devouring his mouth. It was intimate—all tongue and teeth. As it receded, gentler kisses took its place.

“How about I put something else in you first, darling,” Hannibal teased.

Will groaned. “You’re terrible. Shockingly terrible. Honestly don’t know how I stand you.”

A week later, with Hannibal's assistance, Will chose their man: the Great Red Dragon. Hannibal had been receiving strange letters from a wizard by the name of Francis Dolaryhyde, and after reading all of them, Will knew without a doubt that Dolarhyde was the one who had killed the families and given them mirrors for eyes. All in the name of some great becoming. Ritual sacrifice was not uncommon in the old wizarding world, but in modern times, it had been deemed barbaric. Dolarhyde was indeed a monster worthy of being Hannibal and Will's prey, but Will could sympathize with the feeling of not being the sole inhabitant of your body. When he thought of Grutas there, hiding inside of him, he had to actively resist the urge to claw him out. But unlike Will, nothing could help Dolarhyde but death.

They waited on a cliff by the ocean in one of Hannibal's private houses.

Will pitied the man, but he would be put out of his misery today.

Not their first kill together, according to Hannibal, but perhaps the most significant.

Hannibal would strike the final stroke.

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The dragon appeared in a whirl of bright deadly curses and teeth.

It was a glorious becoming.

Will was ripped apart before he was put together.

He now carried a piece of Hannibal's soul with him.

Always.

He was Hannibal's in the most intimate way blood could give them. The fire burned everything else away.

They embraced.

Will felt the thousands of strands of possibilities between them stretch on the cusp of infinity. The great dark night felt quiet and immense, like air filling the lungs of some great unknown beast.

Hannibal's soul in Will's hands.

Will's heart in Hannibal's hands.

Hannibal's heart against Will's teeth.

Will’s soul against Hannibal’s lips.

They fell.

Chapter End Notes

And that's a wrap! Sorry the ending is a little rushed. I am not the best at magic duelling fight scenes, so I tried to avoid getting too specific with Dolarhyde. I know the ending might also seem a bit ambiguous. I didn't want to give the piece a set epilogue, but if you're curious, I imagine that, of course, Hannibal and Will end up getting married. Probably one of the biggest events in the wizarding world if Hanni has anything to say about it. Will may or may not stay on as a teacher (I leave that up to you). And of course our murder husbands continue taking care of the monsters of the wizarding world together in the next phase of their life.

Ask me in the comments if you're curious about something or some fate of some character I didn't mention and I will do my best to answer.

I may end up doing some timestamps about Will, Hannibal, and Mischa's time together in Hogwarts, as I have a lot of headcanon (or is it backstory?) of all three of them together. Would that be something y'all are interested in?

Thank you so much for supporting me with all your comments, kudos, and bookmarks! It really means the world to me. I hope you enjoyed this final chapter. Let me know in the comments below. <3 <3 <3

Love,
- LovelyLotus

End Notes

Hi! I'm so excited to be sharing with you my first fic for the Hannibal fandom. This takes place after the original Harry Potter series for maximum universe flexibility, but you could take it as an AU if you wish. I would also like to credit Everett_Harte for the very adorable nickname teacup used in her fic, Fruitful (you should go read it asap).

This is dedicated to the lovely Fannibal community which has provided so many stories that have sustained me and changed the way I write and view the nature of love and the world. Thank you so much everyone.

Also, most of this is already written, so the wait shouldn't be too long. Thank you for reading. <3

Much love,
- LovelyLotus

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!